

THE
REVOLUTION

THE
WORK OF GOD,

AND A

CAUSE OF JOY;
TWO SERMONS

DELIVERED IN

BRISTO-STREET MEETING-HOUSE,

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K
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S E R M O N I.

PSALM CXXXVI. 3.

THE LORD HATH DONE GREAT THINGS FOR
US; WHEREOF WE ARE GLAD.

NO people on the face of the earth possess a larger share of the blessings of providence, or have greater reason to remark the loving kindness of the Lord, in conferring, and in preserving them, than the inhabitants of Britain. Some enjoy a warmer sun, less variable seasons, and a more fruitful soil; but none, a more excellent civil constitution, or greater religious liberty. Our island, placed in a temperate region of the globe, is neither scorched in summer by the burning rays of the sun, nor benumbed in winter by extreme severity of cold. Blessed with surrounding seas, which increase its temperature beyond that of countries on the continent in the same latitudes, it finds, in these
seas,

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seas, food for its inhabitants in years of scarcity, and protection from the incursions of enemies in times of war; the means of preservation from pestilential diseases which spread desolation where-ever they approach, and incitements to the industry of its people, by the facility of exporting its produce and manufactures, and of importing, from other quarters of the world, whatever may suit their necessity or convenience. These numerous advantages of our lot, too seldom considered, are not the work of chance. They are the operation of *the Most High, who divideth to the nations their inheritance**; and ought to be acknowledged with gratitude, and improved to the honour of our divine Benefactor.

The same God who *bath chosen our inheritance for us* in an island so rich in natural advantages, has, with a hand not less liberal, dispensed to us blessings of a religious kind. Our forefathers were a race of painted Barbarians; ignorant alike of civilized life, and of true religion: who had little more of human nature than the shape, and few more ideas of religion than the beasts that perish. *They walked in darkness; they dwelt in the land of the shadow of death*†. While the
gross

* Deut. xxxii. 8.

† Isa. ix. 2.

gross darkness, however, was covering them, and they had neither heard the fame, nor seen the glory of the Lord, Britain was not forgotten by him. The light of truth brake forth upon it as the morning, and its darkness became as the noon-day. It was scarcely known to the rest of the world even by name, and was at a great distance from those countries whose inhabitants were civilized, and where the gospel was first preached. Yet providence, a little before the birth of Christ, conducted the Romans across the seas to us, who instructed us in the arts of life; and, soon after, sent Christians, driven by persecution from their own habitations, to our island for refuge, who made us acquainted with the glorious truths of the gospel. By this kind dispensation, a surprising and happy change was effected. Savages were transformed into men, and Heathens into Christians; and the divine promise received, in the experience of Britain, an early accomplishment, *The isles shall wait for his law* *.

This light which God kindled among us, though soon obscured by ignorance and superstition, hath never yet been extinguished; and the favour, which is increased by conferring it so early, is still farther increased,

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* Isa. xlii. 4.

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by the enjoyment of it for so many ages. The general apostacy from true religion, which began at Rome, was later in reaching to Britain than to other places ; on account of our distance, our insular situation, and the little communication at that time between us and the nations on the continent. Our night of antichristian superstition, commencing at a later hour, was less dark, and sooner brightened into day. Some stars ever twinkled in our hemisphere, and the pale light of the moon occasionally shot from behind the black clouds which darkened our sky. For, while the candlestick was removed from the churches of Asia, and popish ignorance quite overspread most of the nations of Europe, the light of truth had scarcely died out in the western islands of Scotland, where it had been preserved by the Culdees, when it was rekindled in England, by means of Wickliff and his followers ; among whom it burned in secret till the æra of the Reformation.

At that period, the Lord visited us with new and surprising mercy. Christianity had degenerated into a system of ridiculous ceremonies, and idolatrous worship. It was but a few removes from heathenism. Its teachers were *blind leaders of the blind*. They had scarcely learning enough to qualify them for
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reading those Latin prayers, which it was devotion to repeat, although they did not understand them; and their people groped for the way to heaven *as the blind gropeth in darkness*, supposing themselves good Christians if they attended Mass, counted their beads, and could mumble over the Paternoster. In this melancholy situation many nations still remain. But God, in love to Britain, *destroyed the face of the covering which was cast over us, and the vail which was spread over us**. He had scarcely raised up Luther, that burning and shining light, to oppose the tyranny and superstition of Rome, and rekindle the light of the gospel in Germany, before the light of the reformation began to dawn upon us. The knowledge of the truth was diffused through England, by means of different instruments; and, in this part of the island, this glorious work was performed, particularly by means of that great man of God, John Knox. The work was of God, and could not be overthrown. Notwithstanding powerful opposition from Rome and hell, the gospel, in its purity, was introduced among us at that time; and though it is now, in many places, sadly obscured by ignorance, and

corrupted

• Isa. xlv. 7.

corrupted by error, and is every where greatly undervalued and much abused, God in mercy hath continued it with us to this day.

Here, therefore, we should have made a pause, erected our *Ebenezer* with this inscription, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped**; and sung the song of Zion recorded in the text, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad*;—were it not that the conduct of providence, and the occasion of this day, call upon us to proceed forward and remark fresh instances of the divine favour.

EVER since the period of the Reformation the emissaries of Rome have been active, in *deceiving the hearts of the simple, and again entangling them with the yoke of bondage* †. It has not always been in secret that they have laboured at their infamous trade. They have wrought under the shade of night, or in the face of day, as they have judged it most conducive for effecting their great design.

Not long after the Reformation, they attempted, by fire and faggot, to extirpate the Protestant religion, and to rebuild their Babel upon the blood and ashes of the saints. So furiously did they drive, that *except those days had been shortened, there should no flesh have*

* 1 Sam. vii. 12.

† Rom. xvi. 18. Gal. v. 1.

have been saved; but for the elect's sake those days were shortened †. Mary of England finished her short, but bloody career, in the space of five years; while, in this northern part of the island, the Protestants were enabled, by constancy and patience, to endure the tribulation of those times, till their persecutors, in the good providence of God, were deprived of power to disturb the church.

The storm, which had threatened the destruction of our religion, had not long been scattered, when the sky began to darken around us again with more than usual horror in its aspect, and seemed to portend inevitable ruin. The spirits of the followers of the Beast, were chafed at their disappointment; and, determined to effect their purpose, they collected a force which they trusted could not possibly fail to insure them ample vengeance. A fleet of unexampled strength was fitted out by Spain, equipped at vast expence, and furnished with every implement of war and of slavery, for the avowed purpose of destroying our liberty, and extirpating our religion. The flower of the Spanish and Italian nobility, inflamed with zeal, and confident of conquest as their present, and of heaven as their future reward, embarked on

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† Mat. xxiv. 22.

board of it. They sent to Rome for a blessing. The Balaam of that place came at their request; impressed his name upon it, and insured its success. It was stiled THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA; for they imagined that *those whom he blessed, were blessed; and that those whom he cursed, were cursed**. But it sunk under the blessing of which it was so proud. The winds and the waves fought against it; and the resentment of JEHOVAH, and his guardian care of Britain, were so visibly displayed in its destruction, that he who ran might read it.

What could not be accomplished by force, was afterwards attempted by stratagem. Men who thought that they should do God good service by destroying Heretics, invented the infernal contrivance of blowing up with gunpowder the King, Lords and Commons in parliament assembled. Rome was privy to the design. She imagined that, in the general calamity, she would be able to impose upon us her dark and absurd superstitions. *Their works were in the dark; and they said, Who seeth us †? But the eye of the Omniscient saw, and he disappointed the devices of the crafty, so that their hands could not perform their enterprize ‡.*

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* Numb. xxii. 6. † Isa. xxix. 15. ‡ Job v. 12.

To deprive us of those privileges which we enjoy, many subsequent attempts were made, and defeated. But a fairer prospect never offered itself, than when James the Seventh of Scotland and Second of England filled the throne. A tyrant in temper, and a bigot for Popery, he aimed at the overthrow of religion and liberty. The time-servers of that age encouraged him in his black designs. He had almost accomplished them. No human means of deliverance appeared, when he who had often been the Saviour of Britain raised up William Prince of Orange, to effect our deliverance. On this day hundred years he arrived for our rescue. *The hand of the Lord was with him**; and we were delivered. This event, which crowned our former blessings, and secured the enjoyment of them, is what we are this day met to celebrate in thanksgivings to the Governor among the nations. And what language is more suitable to an occasion intended to commemorate so great a deliverance than that of the text, *The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad!*

Accommodating the text to the business of this day, I shall, in what follows, give you
such

* Acts xi. 21.

such an account as I am able of *the great things done for us* in the Revolution;—collect from the history of the Revolution such facts as may convince us that *the Lord hath done* these things for us;—and shew that joy should spring up in our hearts at the recollection of these great acts of divine power and grace.

I. THE great things done for us at the Revolution may be reduced to three general heads;—Deliverance from civil oppression, —from ecclesiastical tyranny,—and from popish superstition.

First, By the Revolution we were delivered from Civil Oppression.

The house of Stuart had always been inimical to the liberties of the subject, and had strained hard for absolute power; insomuch that, notwithstanding the partiality which is natural for an ancient race of kings, their memory is offensive in the nostrils of every friend to the rights of human nature and to the prosperity of Britain.

Charles the First drove so fast, and invaded the rights of his subjects in so many instances, that our fathers found themselves unable any longer to submit to the yoke. Many of them were wise and good men. But oppression made

made them mad; and, to get rid of the tyrant, they plunged themselves into the horrors of a civil war, and stopped not till they had beheaded their king, and overturned the constitution.

One should have thought that the fate of the father should have been a lesson of instruction to the children, to beware of sporting with the rights, and insulting the feelings of their subjects. But God had infatuated them. Charles the Second was a profligate, and James his brother, who succeeded him, a bigot. The one oppressed his subjects in order to support his extravagance, and the other to make room for his priests; and the groans of the nation could not reach the ears of the first, who was continually surrounded with flatterers, nor touch the heart of the second, which was steeled against compassion by the cruel counsels of jesuitical advisers.

In the reign of Charles the Second the words of the royal preacher were accomplished, *Wo to thee, O land, when thy princes eat in the morning* *. Religion and liberty were then alike the subject of ridicule. Religion and hypocrisy, liberty and republicanism, were considered as terms of equivalent import; and the detestation which is due to the

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* Eccl. x. 16.

one was wickedly transferred to the other. To avoid the imputation of hypocrisy, the court, and those who imitated their manners, not only threw off the garb of devotion, but violated every law of decency and of modesty. That they might prove their loyalty, and convince the world that they were not republicans, the divine right of kings, absolute power, and passive obedience, were the favourite topics of discourse, and the great subject of what issued from the press, and from the pulpit. With the errors of the Protectorate, they laid aside what was worthy in the principles and manners of that period, and deviated into a worse extreme. It seemed as if the course of nature had experienced a change; insomuch that, as one wittily expresses it, one should have concluded that "lewdness and "loyalty had constituted the whole duty of "man." *Judgement was turned away backward, and justice stood afar off: for truth had fallen in the street, and equity could not enter. Yea, truth failed; and he that departed from evil made himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgement* *.

The cup of iniquity was not yet full. The time had not arrived when, *for the oppression of*

* Isa. lix. 14, 15.

of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, the Lord should arise, to set them in safety from those that puffed at them *. Charles was called from the throne of oppression to the tribunal of the universal Judge; and after him his brother James stood up in his estate, a raiser of taxes in the glory of his kingdom; but within few days he was destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle †. An inglorious reign of four years terminated his career of tyranny. He meanly deserted his crown; and lived, for many years, an exile from his country and his throne; a monument of the vengeance of heaven who hateth oppression, and of the just indignation of his abused subjects. Yet he finished not his reign until that was performed by him, which Rehoboam had only power to resolve: *His little finger was thicker than his brother's loins; and whereas his brother did lade us with a heavy yoke, he added to our yoke: His brother chastised us with whips, but he chastised us with scorpions ‡.*

The throne, which should be a blessing, was, during his reign, a curse to the nation. Arbitrary power was openly avowed, oppressive measures were publicly adopted; and not only the property, but the lives of our forefathers were wantonly taken away. A
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* Psalm xii. 5.

† Dan. xi. 20.

‡ 1 Kings xii. 10, 11.

power not only of suspending the enforcement of particular statutes, but of dispensing with the fundamental laws of the kingdom, was claimed, and exercised by the crown. Even the charters of corporations were forcibly taken from them. Judges without conscience and without humanity were set over us. They held their offices not by their integrity, but by their devotion to the will of the monarch; and, of consequence, men who had often violated their oaths, and sinned long against the light of their consciences, whenever they scrupled to go greater lengths in wickedness, were turned out, in order to make room for men more wicked and less feeling than themselves. Juries were packed; and forced by threatenings to bring in verdicts of guilt, when they could see no crime. Men were made offenders for a word. Suspicions were admitted as proof. The *boot* and the *thumb-kin*, those instruments of torture, were employed, at least in Scotland, to extort confession; and the oath of a single miscreant was considered as sufficient reason for depriving many of the best men in the country of their substance, and of their lives. What Solomon saw in his time was seen in all its horrors in Britain; *The place of judgement,*
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that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.*

These were only the beginnings of evil. By these it was intended to break the spirit of the nation, and to prepare it for submitting more tamely to a heavier yoke. A general insensibility had already taken place. The multitude, like Issachar, were disposed to *bow the shoulder to bear and voluntarily become servants to tribute †*. And, had not God seasonably interposed, we should, at this day, have been the slaves of tyrants, and, like Egypt, according to the denunciation of the prophet, should have been *given over into the hands of cruel lords, and fierce kings should have ruled over us ‡*. But he who hath said, *To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High, To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not §*, graciously sent us deliverance by that Revolution which we are this day met to celebrate. Having filled up the measure of their iniquity, the time of recompence arrived; and our oppressors met with the judgement of the Israelites, *The land spued them out, and they were made wanderers among the nations §*. The Judge of the oppressed put

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* Eccl. viii. 16.

† Gen xlix. 15.

‡ Isa: xix. 4.

§ Lam. iii. 34, 35, 36.

§ Lev. xviii. 28.

Hof. ix. 17.

it into the heart of William, Prince of Orange, to come for our help, and gave it into the power of his hand to accomplish our deliverance.

In consequence of the Revolution which he effected, we feel no longer those evils under which our fathers groaned. Oppression has, since that period, been scarcely known in Britain. We are now free by birth-right; and enjoy a milder government, and a more equitable administration of justice than, perhaps, any other nation in the world. When we reflect on the miseries which we have escaped, and the happiness which we now possess by the Revolution, can we forbear repeating, with emotions of gratitude and joy, the words of the text, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad?*

Secondly, By the Revolution we were delivered from Ecclesiastical Tyranny.

The desire of liberty is congenial to the human mind. It is necessary only to taste, in order to relish it. Civil liberty is indeed valuable, but by an enlightened mind, religious liberty will be held in higher estimation; for the objects of it are nobler, and the advantages resulting from the possession of it more important. The rights of conscience are

are peculiarly sacred. They concern the soul; they respect the eternal world. A Christian would rather be injured in his civil than in his religious rights; would much sooner be robbed of his property, than resign his conscience into the hands of fallible men, and believe and worship as they should see meet to enjoin.

This, however, was the hard necessity to which our ancestors were reduced. No alternative was left them between sinning against their consciences, and suffering for conscience sake. Acts of uniformity were passed, and rigorously enforced; and men, more anxious for power than for the welfare of the people over whom they had usurped a lordly dominion, insisted for the observance of forms of religion, which few of themselves had accurately examined, and for submission to an ecclesiastical authority, which those on whom they enjoined it deemed it unlawful to obey.

Charles the Second was no sooner restored to the throne of his fathers than, contrary to the most solemn vows, he re-established Episcopacy. Nonconformity to the religion of the state became the greatest of crimes; and no man was any longer safe in his habitation, whose conscience did not suffer him to submit to the authority of a worthless Prelate,

late, or attend on the ministry of an ignorant or drunken Curate.

Two years had scarcely elapsed, when about two thousand of the best ministers of the gospel in England, and upwards of three hundred in Scotland, were violently torn from their people whom they loved, discharged from preaching that gospel to which they had been called, and deprived of all human means of supporting themselves and their families. Such a melancholy day was never seen in Britain, as that on which these worthy men from the pulpit took a solemn farewell of their flocks. It was like *the weeping of Jazer*; it resembled *the mourning of Hadad-rimmon* †. The voice of lamentation was heard in the habitations of thousands of our Israel. *The hearts of the righteous were made sad, and the hands of the wicked were strengthened* ‡.

The sufferings of many of these excellent persons are upon record; and are known by not a few of you. They chose to obey God, rather than man; and the afflictions which they endured were severe, in proportion to their innocence and integrity. To enter a royal burgh, upon any necessity whatever; to presume to approach within some miles of the habitations of the suffering remains of their flocks,

† Isa. xvi. 9. Zech. xii. 11.

‡ Ezek. xiii. 22.

flocks, were crimes which subjected them to fining and imprisonment. Driven from the society of men, *they wandered in deserts and in mountains; being destitute, afflicted, tormented* *. The canopy of heaven was often their only covering from the driving blast; or, if the rough tread of the feet of their persecutors, heard from afar, alarmed them, the hospitable darkness of some den or cave of the earth was their place of refuge. Many of them sealed their testimony with their blood; for they were accounted worthy of death by man, because they could not be unfaithful to God. But God whom they served was with them, and supported them. He enabled them to *glory in tribulations*, and to meet death not with composure only, but with joy; *rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of Christ* †.

These public calamities were not confined to ministers of the gospel who professed an attachment to the truth. Every man who gave them countenance, or even declined approving of the measures of the times, met with a similar fate. For who that feared God could be safe when *the wicked walked on every side, and the vilest men were exalted* ‡? Drunkenness, blasphemy, and uncleanness, were not considered

* Heb. xi. 37, 38.

† Acts v. 41.

‡ Psalm xii. 8.

considered as at all criminal in this licentious age. Laymen, nay even clergymen, might have been guilty of these crimes, and yet have possessed no small share of the public regard. But to be three sabbaths absent from a parish church, filled by one who was neither able, nor, perhaps, inclined to instruct, subjected persons to a heavy fine. To assemble together for prayer, or for religious conference, was an act of rebellion; and to hear a Presbyterian preach in the fields, exposed to the mercy of barbarous dragoons, who, under the sanction of law, might maim or murder at pleasure. *The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision**. Men travelled far in quest of the gospel; and perished in multitudes by the hands of their persecutors. *There was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries†*.

Such was the state of things in England, and particularly in Scotland, for twenty-eight years. The bishops of that period, especially the Scotch, as worthless a race as ever wore the mitre, were the great instigators of the persecution; and their curates, in general as worthless but more obscure, were the

* 1 Sam. iii. 1.

† 2 Chron. xv. 5.

the most diligent and active informers. Religion, by means of their unhallowed conduct, cast but a dim light; and had they been permitted to exercise the same tyranny much longer, it is probable that it should soon have been extinguished in Britain.

But, in this desperate moment, the Lord appeared to judge the oppressed, that the man of the earth might no more oppress*. A voice was heard as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child; the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewailed herself, that spread her hands, saying, *Wo is me now, for my soul is wearied because of murderers†.* The souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they had held, seemed to mingle their cries with those of the remnant that was left. They seemed to cry with a loud voice, saying, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth‡.* The Lord bowed his ear, and heard. *I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, was the divine reply; and I have heard their groaning, by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows§.*

Accordingly, he raised up William, Prince of Orange, a man who sought the welfare of Britain.

* Psalm x. 18.

† Jer. iv. 31.

‡ Rev. vi. 9, 10.

§ Exod. iii. 7. Acts vii. 34.

Britain*. His right hand he held, and his ways he directed in his great and hazardous enterprize; and crown'd him at length with never-fading honour, making him the happy instrument of effecting our deliverance from the yoke of those intolerant and persecuting bigots who maintained over us an oppressive sway. Our sky brightened with his success. We can now suffer no religious oppression, from which it is not in our power to escape. Nonconformity to the religion of the state exposes to no punishment. If dissatisfied, we are permitted to retire. Episcopacy continues to be the established religion of England: It wears, however, a milder aspect, and Dissenters are allowed to worship God according to their conscience. Though Presbyterianism, as established in Scotland, is not, at present, in every point, such as all can approve, yet we who have judged it our duty to separate from the communion of the National Church, meet in our own assemblies without fear, and enjoy the protection of mild and equitable laws. *We sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree; and none make us afraid*†. —When, therefore, we compare the past times with the present; the liberty we now enjoy, with the bondage to which our forefathers were

* Neh. ii. 10. † Micah iv. 4.

were subjected; the boldness with which we may now avow our religious sentiments, with the shackles which once fettered, and the fears which over-awed the minds of men; and when we look up to the Revolution as the mean of the happy difference, have we not reason again to sing, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad?*

Thirdly, By the Revolution we were delivered from Popish Superstition.

The religion of Rome is not only unscriptural, but unmanly and absurd. Its fantastic ceremonies are fitter for the amusement of children, than for occupying the serious attention of men. Its self-contradictory doctrines are what thinking men must deride, and good men must abhor. Its mean superstition debases the mind over which it spreads its baleful influence, and ruins the soul which it is its professed aim to save.

It was the happiness of Britain to be delivered from this gloomy and destructive religion at the Reformation. Our forefathers, sensible of the greatness of their deliverance, and not ignorant of the sentiments with which it inspires its deluded votaries, prudently fortified themselves against the machinations of those who might attempt again to wreath

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about their necks its galling and intolerable yoke. Penalties were enacted against Papists, and tests were formed in order to exclude them from civil and military employments; that it might not be in the power of the vassals of Rome, to merit her rewards, by the extirpation of what she deems heresy, nor to practise upon us the arts of a religion which teaches, that the goodness of the end sanctifies the means.

These, however, which were intended as a barrier against the encroachments of Popery, were, in the unhappy period to which we refer, first dispensed with, and afterwards set aside. In the reign of Charles the Second, popish priests met with more indulgence than protestant ministers who dissented from the established church. It is, indeed, natural for men who have cast off the fear of God, to discover most partiality for those who have departed farthest from the truth, and whose principles are least unfriendly to vice. After his brother, however, ascended the throne, Papists became the favourites of the monarch, and Popery was, from principle, protected and cherished. The king himself, as we formerly observed, was a rigid Papist; and whatever he might be supposed to want in zeal,
was

was more than supplied by the bigotry of his queen.

Bad as these times were, two different attempts had been made, during the life of Charles, to exclude him from the throne; on this principle, which, since the Revolution, has happily become the law of the country, that, by the constitution of Britain, a Papist cannot inherit the throne. But these attempts miscarried; and many of the men who were most active in supporting *the Bill of Exclusion* soon perished for their zeal.

In such a reign, what could have been expected but that which actually took place; the formation of a scheme, in conjunction with France and hell, to deprive us of our liberty, and to carry us back to Babylon, that house of bondage, out of which we had been mercifully brought? With this view, the king not only openly attended mass, and kept his priests about him, but promoted avowed Papists to the chief places of power and trust, in the civil and military departments. Great pains were taken to gain over, by flattery and bribes, the nobility and gentry to the popish religion. Pretended conversions were announced with designed ostentation; and the subjects of them were rewarded, for their hypocrisy, with some place of honour, or emolument,

lument, formerly occupied by a Protestant. Imitating the example of the great, many of the common people *forsook the Lord God of their fathers, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them; and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger**.

Having succeeded thus far, the vail began to be drawn aside, and the mystery which was under this conduct was concealed with less care. A Jesuit was admitted a member of the king's privy council. Methods were devised to fill the magistracy, in most towns, either with professed Papists, or with men, not unfriendly to their principles. An ambassador had even been publicly sent to the Pope, a thing quite unknown in a Protestant kingdom; and a nuncio had arrived in Britain from Rome, some time before the designs of the Prince of Orange were known. Every thing was in forwardness for overturning the established religion, and substituting the religion of darkness and idolatry in its room. The subjugation of Britain was considered as almost accomplished; and it was fondly expected, that, when the bulwark of the Reformation should be destroyed, it would be no difficult task to subdue the other
Protestant

* Judges ii. 12.

Protestant states, and to extend the papal dominion to its ancient boundaries.

Had not God raised up a deliverer for us in the hour of need, our situation, at this moment, should have been truly deplorable. We must now have been subjected to the fury of persecution; or have been the dupes of ignorant, impious, and designing priests. Deprived of the scriptures, which the Romish church, that she may not expose her absurd and blasphemous tenets, with-holds from the people, we should have been wandering in a maze of inextricable error. Instead of worshipping the true God through one Mediator, Jesus Christ, we should have been, at this day, bowing before images, and worshipping the consecrated host: presenting our prayers to the Virgin Mary; employing as intercessors multitudes of superstitious fools or abandoned wretches, whom it hath pleased that church to canonize; nay, even supplicating the help of imaginary beings, who never existed except in legendary tales. Instead of seeking preparation for heaven through the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God, we should have been expecting it by the fire of purgatory; a fire which the priests of Rome have kindled for their own gain.

Thousands

30 *The Revolution the Work of God.*

Thousands of the saints had, for a long time, been interceding at the throne of grace, that God would avert the threatened calamity; and he was graciously pleased to listen to their prayers. He proved *a very present help in trouble* *. At the very season when every man's heart was faint, and the Protestant churches abroad had given up Britain as lost; at the very season when Rome was rejoicing, and hell preparing for triumph, he graciously interposed, and *plucked us as a brand out of the fire* †. He gave us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ‡. A revolution so surprising, a deliverance so beneficial, demands our praise; and, in commemorating it, our song to God should be, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.*

* Psalms xvi. 1. † Zech. iii. 2. ‡ Isa. lxi. 3.

S E R M O N II.

PSALM CXXVI. 3.

THE LORD HATH DONE GREAT THINGS
FOR US, WHEREOF WE ARE GLAD.

IN the preceding discourse, I have given you an account of *the great things done for us* in the Revolution. In this, I proceed to collect, from the history of that event, such facts as are fitted to convince us, that *the Lord hath done* these things for us.

II. THE administration of providence is the work of God. The revolutions of empires, as well as the changes which happen in the lot of individuals, are performed under his eye, and take place according to his appointment. *Wisdom and might are his; and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings* *. In the ordinary course of human events, the operation of God

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* Dan. ii. 20, 21.

is not apparent. The wheel of providence turns round, but the hand that moves it is unseen. Second causes are employed, and the agency of the great First Cause we are scarcely able to discern. But in the Revolution, which we are this day met to celebrate, the hand of God was visible. Though the Prince of Orange was the instrument raised up by providence to effect it, it was written in legible characters upon it, *This is the doing of the Lord.* The singular circumstances attending it demonstrate, that it was not only by the permission, but with the approbation, and by the aid of heaven.

In this point of view, the person who accomplished our deliverance attracts our observation. He was of the house of Nassau, the great bulwark of liberty and of the Protestant religion in the Low Countries; *one, moreover, born out of due time*, after the death of his father, and singularly preserved during the weakness of infancy, and amidst the dangers of war. It was natural to think that God had preserved him for some great work; and who a fitter instrument to be employed in rescuing Britain from Popery and slavery, than the descendant and representative of those illustrious men, who had been the mean of
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delivering and of preserving their own country from similar calamities?

When we look more narrowly, however, into the history of this ever memorable event, a croud of facts present themselves to our observation, which demonstrate, in a more direct manner, the peculiar agency of God in accomplishing the Revolution.

First, The Seasonableness of the Revolution leads us to consider it as the doing of the Lord.

*The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth.** He observes the designs of oppressors, and the miseries of the oppressed. He permits the former to triumph, and the latter to groan for a season: But, when the wicked are flattering themselves that their schemes shall finally succeed, and his people are beginning to despond, saying; *Our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts †*, in that very moment he sends seasonable and surprising deliverance.

His people have often had experience of this, to their unspeakable joy: *He that keepeth them can neither slumber nor sleep ‡*. The most secret contrivances, and the best laid schemes of wicked men, are open to his view:

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* 2 Chron. xvi. 9. † Ez: k xxxvii. 11. ‡ Psal. cxxi. 4.

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His eye follows them in all their doublings and windings; and, though he should not, for a while, interpose for the deliverance of his people, yet his mercy never comes a moment too late. The time of extremity is the time of his opportunity to help. When iniquity is on full march to his people's destruction, and the hand of wickedness is lifted up to fetch the fatal stroke, suddenly it is arrested by him, saying, *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther.* By sending deliverance in such seasonable moments, he spreads wider confusion among his enemies, and more abundant joy among his friends; he demonstrates the deliverance to be his own performance, and illustrates the meaning of his promise, *The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left* *.

The Revolution is an illustrious proof of this wise and provident care of the Guardian of Britain. The scheme which had been formed for subjecting us to Popery and arbitrary power, was just ripe for execution. Multitudes were wrapped up in their own ease, and either cared not for danger, or would not suffer themselves to believe that the threatened calamities were so near; while those who apprehended

* Deut. xxxii. 36.

apprehended the full extent of their danger, saw themselves inclosed on every side, and could perceive no human way of escape. Having trampled, with impunity, on the rights, and tyrannized over the consciences of our ancestors so long, and having strengthened themselves by their gradual encroachments, our oppressors were confident that all was safe. Not apprehending disappointment, the emissaries of Rome were inspired with imprudent boldness, and indulged in extravagant, but short-lived joy.

In this critical moment, the Revolution took place. *The Lord saw the oppressions that were done under the sun. He beheld the tears of such as were oppressed, and that they had no comforter; and that on the side of their oppressors there was power; but that they had no comforter*.* He waited till we were trembling upon the verge of a gulph, which would have swallowed up our religion and liberties; but, when the ground was beginning to give way under us, he pulled us back with his arm of love. By means of William, whom he sent as a deliverer, in the day of our extremity, *he brought us out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and brake our bands asunder †.* Some base and servile spirits, having tasted the unhallowed sweets

* Eccles. iv. 1.

† Psalm cvii. 14.

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sweets of lawless power, or having lost all relish for the manly pleasures of civil liberty and of true religion, came forth with reluctance from the house of bondage; and often looked back, with longing desires, to *the flesh-pots of Egypt, the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick*. But the great body of the people regarded the deliverance as performed *by the finger of God*, exulted in it as a peculiarly seasonable testimony of his watchful care over them, and sang, as they came out of slavery, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.*

Secondly, THE Revolution was an unexpected event.

Many who had suffered in the cause of religion and liberty, in those troublous times which preceded the Revolution, died in the faith of Britain's deliverance. Their dying words were somewhat like those of Joseph, *God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land**. But, they were alike ignorant of the season, and of the manner of it.

Attempts had been repeatedly made to shake off the yoke; but were as frequently frustrated. The people, become desperate
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* Gen. l. 24.

by the severity of oppression, rose in arms, at different times, in several parts of the country. Providence, however, said, that the time was not yet. Many of them were cut off; and their premature endeavours proved abortive.

An attempt, in particular, was made in favour of the Duke of Monmouth, in England by himself, and in Scotland by the Earl of Argyle. Multitudes, when they beheld that young man, were disposed to say, as Samuel concerning the eldest son of Jesse, *Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord said, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him**. They made unseasonable haste; and perished in the rash attempt.

By these miscarriages, and by the persecution of the times, much of the best blood in the country was spilt. The hands of those who remained faithful to God, and true to the best interests of their country, were weakened. Deliverance appeared at a greater distance than at first; and the cry was heard, *By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small†*.

So unexpected was our deliverance, that our oppressors themselves, though suspicious in a singular degree, when they first heard of the

* 1 Sam. xvi. 6, 7.

† Amos vii. 2.

the intended expedition of the Prince of Orange, could not prevail on themselves to believe, that he could seriously attempt a thing so rash and hazardous. The doctrines of the divine right of kings, and of the passive obedience of subjects, had been, with such industry, inculcated by the creatures of the court, and by those who then filled the pulpits of Britain, that, it was supposed, few would be disposed to ask his assistance, or venture to repair to his standard.

Yet the all-wise God was pleased, by very extraordinary and unexpected means, to accomplish our deliverance. He suffered our oppressors to outwit themselves. In their zeal for Popery, they trampled upon the Bishops of England, and upon the university of Oxford; and provoked them to invite the Prince of Orange to the help of Britain. Those who had *bound heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laid them on mens shoulders* *, having experienced oppression themselves, were taught to feel along with sufferers whom they formerly despised; and their hands were made instrumental in pulling down the structure of iniquity, which they had long and zealously toiled to erect.

The design was known to few, before it
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* Matth. xxiii. 4.

was ready for execution. To those who were privy to it, it was rather an object of fond desire, than of confident expectation. When William actually arrived, surprise was the first emotion at the intelligence. It was soon succeeded by shouts of joy, from every true friend of the Protestant religion, and of civil liberty. The voice of heaven seemed to direct their eyes towards the Prince of Orange. They re-echoed the voice, saying, *Arise, anoint him; for this is he* *.

Let us, then, view this event so daring, so hazardous, and in the judgement of the wisest men almost impracticable; let us attend to the very astonishing and unexpected success with which this singular and heroic enterprise of William was crowned. We must be struck with the very conspicuous display of the care of our divine Protector; and must cry aloud, with admiration and wonder, *Surely the Lord hath done great things for us!*

Thirdly, THE speed and ease with which the Revolution was accomplished, demonstrate it to be the doing of the Lord.

The revolutions of kingdoms are commonly the work of time; and attended with great labour, and much expence of human blood.

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* 1 Sam. xvi. 12.

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In Britain, at the period of the Revolution, the throne seemed secure against every attempt to overturn it. It was defended by a standing army of thirty thousand men, commanded by Papists, and accustomed to oppress; and by all those whose interest it was to support a system by which they enriched themselves, and to avoid the danger of being called to account for the injustice which they had done, and for the murders which they had committed. But there is *no king saved by the multitude of an host* *. When God hath forsaken persons for their wickedness, and taketh part with those who rise up against them, they may take counsel, but it shall come to nought; they may gird themselves, but they shall be broken in pieces †.

The Prince of Orange set sail for Britain with no more than fourteen thousand men. Trusting in the justice of his cause, and in the aid of heaven, he refused a greater force. He, who would not suffer more than three hundred of Gideon's men to go down and attack the camp of Moab, that the deliverance might the more remarkably appear to be from heaven, put it into his heart not to trust in the number of his troops; and, by the success with which he attended his enterprize, shewed that

* Psalm xxi. 16. † Isaiah viii. 9, 10.

that there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many, or by few*.

When the oppressions under which the inhabitants of Britain groaned first reached the ears of William, it was proposed to him by the Elector of Brandenburg, that he should make an attempt in their favour. He, at that time, declined it, as premature and unseasonable; but declared, that, rather than that he should see Britain subjected to Popery and arbitrary power, he would embark for their deliverance, although he should be obliged to cross the seas to them in a fisher's boat.

God, who inspired him with such zeal for the welfare of Britain, not only taught him to wait for the fittest season, but prospered him beyond his warmest expectations. He landed in Britain without opposition. Though he was a foreigner, the inhabitants, instead of fearing or resisting him as an invader, welcomed him as a friend, and a deliverer. *They came to him, day by day, to help him, as the people did to David, until his little army became a great host, like the host of God†.* Yet he needed not their aid. His name carried terror in it. His enemies were afraid of his countenance. Conscious of the disaffection of the people, and suspicious every man of his brother,

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* 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

† 1 Chron. xii. 22.

ther, they had not courage to employ the means which they possessed; and ventured not to risk a battle in their own defence, but basely fled, *when no man pursued.* *

A great part of the country threw off the yoke, without waiting to hear of the success of the Prince's arms. The king's own troops, ashamed to fight in his cause, deserted him in whole regiments. His favourites daily disappeared. His own daughter stole away to his enemies, in the night. A nation, who, a little before, talked in terms so extravagant of the extent of royal prerogative, and of the damnable crime of resistance, revolted at once from their principles, and rose in arms against the tyrant. At last, the unhappy monarch, abandoned by his friends, and hated by his subjects, fled from his throne. He wandered for some time, from place to place, in continual fear; till, at last, he escaped to France; where the cry of his oppressed subjects could no longer reach his ear, and where he was safe from their reproaches and resentment. Was not this the work of God, who *poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness; where there is no way, yet setteth the poor on high from affliction* †?

It was not the least remarkable circumstance

* Prov. xxviii. 1.

† Psalm. cvii. 40, 41.

stance attending the Revolution, that it was effected without loss of blood. The happiness resulting from any deliverance is much diminished, when the groans of the wounded, and the tears of many families, who mourn for the loss of their relations slain in battle, mingle with the general joy. In civil commotions this is remarkably the case. Kingdoms are commonly divided; and the spirits of the contending parties are more rankled against one another, than if they were natural enemies. Brotherly love degenerates into the bitterest rancor; and marks of lasting devastation commemorate the strife.

None of these melancholy circumstances attended the Revolution. Some rencounters took place between the two armies; but so insignificant, as scarcely to have obtained a place in history. Our greatest privileges were, through the good providence of God, bought at a very easy rate. Within the space of a few months, and without any violent convulsion, a revolution, the most beneficial that a nation could experience, was not only effected, but order was re-established, and every thing settled and prosperous, as if there had been no *turning of things upside down*.

Neighbouring nations saw, and were astonished. Our friends abroad, hearing of our
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happy and unexpected deliverance, believed not for joy*. *When all our enemies that were about us heard thereof, they were much cast down in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God †. The inhabitants of Britain themselves were filled with amazement. Scarcely persuaded that they were delivered, they sung with joy, like the Jewish church, When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them ‡.*

Fourthly, Many circumstances attending the Revolution, which cannot be arranged under any of the former particulars, concur to prove that it was the work of God.

The tyrant whom William came to oppose, was his mother's brother, and his wife's father. The feelings of nature resisted every attempt which might distress so near a relation. The reproaches of men, ever disposed to form the most unfavourable judgement of one's conduct, seemed to enforce what nature dictated. Yet zeal for the Protestant interest, and a consciousness that it was his duty to attempt

* Luke xxiv. 41.

† Neh. vi. 16.

‡ Psal. cxxvi. 1, 2.

tempt the relief of the oppressed, enabled him to overcome these inferior considerations. *The Lord, in whose hand is the heart of man, as the rivers of water, and who turneth it whithersoever he will**, induced him to sacrifice private affection to the general good; and convinced him, and the Princess Mary his wife, that it was expedient, rather that one man, and he too a near relation, should suffer, than that a whole nation should perish.

But, though William resolved to attempt, how could he effect the deliverance of a mighty nation, when the want of necessary means seemed to throw insurmountable impediments in the way? He had neither money, nor troops at his command, sufficient for so great an enterprize. His enemies knew this, and ridiculed the idea of attempting it. His friends were not ignorant of it, and trembled lest he should miscarry. But Providence interposed; and inclined the States of Holland to supply him with whatever was necessary for his expedition, with unusual liberality, and with a dispatch not natural to the government of that country. Thus, though this *little cloud* which appeared *rising out of the sea*, was only *like a man's hand*, and seemed to prognosticate nothing which could refresh the inhabitants

* Prov. xxi. 1.

inhabitants of Britain, parched for three years and an half with continual oppression, it soon, by the will of God, covered the face of the heavens; *and there was a great and very refreshing rain* †.

In attempting to deliver Britain, William had reason to be alarmed for the safety of Holland. Louis XIV. of France had, some years before, reduced it to the greatest extremity; and, though at that time his designs were defeated, he still looked upon it with an evil eye. Universal monarchy continued to be his aim. He was in league with the king of Britain, whom he meant to employ as his tool in subjecting Europe. He was enflamed with equal zeal for extending the papal dominion; and, flushed with the success of his villany in revoking the Edict of Nantz, about three years before, and shutting up about two thousand Protestant churches within his own dominions he expected, before he should die, to be able to extirpate the reformed religion. A more favourable moment could not have occurred, at once for proving his fidelity to his ally, and for accomplishing his own designs, than when the Prince of Orange was employed in procuring the deliverance of Britain. William saw this; but was not intimidated,

† 1 Kings xviii.. 44, 45.

timidated. The Protestant Princes of Germany considered the deliverance of Britain, and the preservation of Holland, as the common cause of the reformation, and made offer of their services, if necessity should require. But they were not necessary. His enemies were infatuated; and saw not their errors, till it was too late to correct them. While he was preparing for his expedition, the English ambassador took the alarm, and sent information of it to court; but was not believed. The French suspected it, and made an offer of a considerable number of troops to the king of Britain; but it was not accepted: They stood idle upon the coasts of France, while Holland was almost defenceless, yet safe; and Britain was escaping from bondage. Who sees not in this the hand of him *who frustrateth the tokens of liars, and maketh diviners mad, who turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish* *?

A contrary wind might have defeated the intentions of the Prince of Orange, after the most prosperous beginnings. It might have detained his fleet, till a force should have been collected which it could not have opposed; or it might have scattered it, disabled it for service, or sunk it in the deep. But
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* Isa. xliv. 25.

the care of providence was, in this respect, singularly conspicuous.

When the fleet first set sail from Holland, indeed, it met with a contrary wind, and a violent storm; and, after being driven about, for some time, by the fury of contending elements, was under the necessity of returning to port. It consisted of about five hundred ships, mostly transports, which, on account of their number, must, in such a situation, have been in the most imminent danger of destruction. Yet, *he who ruleth the raging of the sea*, so graciously interposed, that not an individual ship was lost; and that the return of the fleet to port, which, on account of the delay occasioned by it, was considered as a great calamity, proved a real advantage, by preserving it from the English fleet, which might have easily destroyed it.

A favourable wind at length sprang up; and while it carried the Prince of Orange and his army through the straits of Dover, it detained the fleet, which meant to oppose them, in its station, till they were out of its reach. Through the mistake of a pilot, in the night, they were carried beyond Torbay, the place at which they judged it safest to disembark; and now they began to fear that all was lost. On a sudden, to the admiration of all on board,

board, the wind, turning round, by the direction of providence, into the opposite quarter, carried them, in a few hours, to their desired haven. It fell a dead calm, and they landed in safety. Soon after, a tempest arose. The Dutch fleet, covered by the land, rode secure; while the English fleet, which had proceeded a considerable way in pursuit of them, was exposed to the mercy of the elements, and so shattered, that they were unfit for putting to sea again that season.

Who, reflecting on these circumstances, so singularly providential, can forbear adoring the God, *who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working?* Let us pause a little; and praise the God of our salvation; *who is the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea; who by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power: who stilleth the noise of the seas the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people* *. Had it seemed good in his sight, he could easily have buried the army of our deliverer in the bottom of the sea, and left us to suffer the miseries of tyranny, rendered more insolent and intolerable by success. But he smiled upon the design; he conducted the enterprize, and in the most extraordinary

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* Psalm lxx. 5, 7.

manner crowned it with success. *If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, now may Britain say; If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul; Then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth *.*

Fifthly, THE singular manner in which the blessings of the Revolution have been preserved to the present time, tends to establish the assertion, that it was the work of God.

When we look forward from the era of the Revolution to the present time, we observe, in the history of Britain, an almost uninterrupted succession of attempts made against our religion and liberties, and, opposed to them, a series of surprising, and very extraordinary deliverances. We have been often thrown into the fire, but never consumed. It has been found, that those who have made

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* Psalm cxxiv.

it their business to overturn the constitution, and restore the ancient royal family, have been fighting against God. Their disappointment has ever been in proportion to the apparent prudence of the measures which they have adopted, and to the greatness of the force which they have mustered against us.

A powerful faction, stiled Jacobites, from their attachment to James, the abdicated monarch, began, immediately after the Revolution, to clog the wheels of government; and studied, if possible, to overthrow it, and plunge us into all those miseries, from which we had obtained deliverance. Like that servile generation, of which we read in the book of Numbers, *they said, one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt**. They argued for the indefeasible right of kings; they formed combinations against the government, with which an indulgent providence had blessed us; they took arms, as often as opportunity occurred, in order to gain by force what by justice they could not. Although their designs were repeatedly frustrated, they persevered with patient malevolence; and one generation of them rose up after another, imbued with the same spirit, and zealous in the same cause. But Britain's God protected

* Numb. xiv. 4.

protected that work, which, in its beginnings, he so singularly favoured; and, in its protection, often illustrated the truth of his own word, *There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand* *.

Soon after the Revolution, these men excited a rebellion in favour of the dethroned tyrant, in Ireland. It seemed to prosper for a while. But how could an attempt succeed, which was abhorred by every true friend of the Protestant religion, and managed by the bloody hands of Irish Papists, who had, some time before, massacred many thousand persons in cold blood, for their religion? Neither number nor valour could make it prosper. *Why were thy valiant men swept away? they stood not, because the Lord did drive them. He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another. They did cry there, as in a similar case, Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a noise; he hath passed the time appointed* †.

France often exerted its strength in the same cause; and fleets were fitted out, and armies raised, and invasions attempted by that perfidious nation. But what has been the issue? The Lord has often made Britain, like Jerusalem in the promise, *a burdensome stone* for

* Prov. xix, 21.

† Jer. xlvii, 15, 16, 17.

for this people. He has often said in his providence, *All that burden themselves with it shall be cut to pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it* *. *Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts, that this people should have laboured in the very fire, and wearied themselves for very vanity* †!

I have not leisure to mention the attempts that were made, in the end of the reign of Queen Anne, in order to restore the family of Stuart. Her death, peculiarly seasonable, defeated these; and gave us the princes of the illustrious house of Hanover, under whom Britain has hitherto been free, prosperous, and happy.

I have only time to mention two great attempts that were made, with the same view, since that period; the one, in the year fifteen of the present century, and the other, in the year forty-five. The dangers to which we were then exposed, I presume, you all know. A Highland host, aided with French money, and French arms, *took evil counsel against us, saying, like Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah of old, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal*. But thus said the Lord God,

* Zech. xii. 3.

† Hab. ii. 13.

God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass *. For a little while, they flattered themselves that every thing prospered. In imagination they were dividing the prey. *My lust, they said, shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them* †. But, in that moment, when their expectations were warmest, *the Lord awaked, as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach* ‡.

Since the last of these attempts, the faction, which would have carried us back into bondage, has languished in obscurity. Its hopes have expired: and, after having maintained, for a century, an ineffectual struggle, it has, of late, openly abandoned the cause for which it has so long, and so zealously contended.

Here, then, is a new chain of evidence, in proof that the Revolution is the work of God. The protection of our religion and liberties, for so long a period, against so many and daring attempts to destroy them, exhibits encouraging views of the divine favour to Britain. It speaks to our enemies, like a voice from heaven, saying, *Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen,*
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* Isa. vii. 5, 6, 7. † Exod. xv. 9. ‡ Psal. lxxviii. 65, 66.

I will be exalted in the earth *. But to us it cries aloud, *Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: This is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Britain; for great is the holy One of Israel in the midst of thee* †.

III. I proceed to shew that joy ought to spring up in our hearts, at the recollection of these acts of the divine power and grace.

The kindness which we receive from heaven demands our sincerest gratitude, and our most abundant joy. We cannot reward God for his mercies; neither can we deserve them. But we ought to relish the blessings which he graciously confers; to feel the obligations under which we are laid by them to their bountiful Author; and to manifest the happiness which we experience in the possession of them, and the deep sense which we entertain of the divine kindness in bestowing them, by every suitable expression of joy. It must be duty to be sensible of favours, which we could not merit; it cannot but be reasonable to acknowledge obligation, when we cannot repay. An insensibility of temper must be equally criminal, in the sight of God, with that arrogance which claims his favours as a debt, and
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* Psal. xli. 10.

† Isa. xii. 6.

disdains to be grateful ; and with that fullness and peevishness which, brooding over imaginary evils, or real calamities, incapacitates us for enjoying, and indisposes us for acknowledging his gifts.

If we form a judgement of the temper of the inhabitants of Britain from their conduct on this day, gratitude for the blessings which, in consequence of the Revolution, we enjoy, must be widely diffused, and joy almost universally prevail. But is there not reason to apprehend that, while William is remembered, by the multitude, God is forgotten ; and that only a small portion of the joy which is this day expressed is rational, holy and divine ? Gratitude which springs up in the morning, and dies at even, can have no firm root in the soul. Joy which, *like the crackling of thorns under a pot*, is noisy but short-lived, cannot proceed from suitable apprehensions of the operation of providence, or a lively sense of his gracious interposition in the Revolution. Yet such, we are intitled to suppose, is the joy of thousands in Britain, who are professing to celebrate this event. Gratitude to God has not been their accustomed exercise ; and, even amid their temporary professions of it, *God is not in all their thoughts**. *The harp and*

* Psalm x. 4.

and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands †.

Let us act a wiser part. Let us ascribe our deliverance, not to the courage of the Prince of Orange, not to the disaffection of the subjects of King James, not to the native spirit of Britons; but to the power and skill of the most High, *who taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and by whom the counsel of the froward is carried headlong ‡.* While we honour the memory of William, let our gratitude be directed to the true Author of the blessings which we enjoy. Let not the fervour of our joy degenerate into thoughtless levity, or criminal intemperance; and, after this season of gladness is past, let habitual gratitude to God live in our hearts and appear in our conduct.

THAT the Revolution is an event the remembrance of which ought to inspire gratitude to God, and excite holy joy, must have frequently occurred to you, while you were following me through the preceding parts of this subject. Suffer me, however, to enforce the exercise of these divine tempers, by recalling to your minds the value of the bless-

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† Isa. v. 12.

‡ Job v. 13.

ings which by the Revolution we enjoy, and our unworthiness of the possession of them.

First, The value of the blessings, which by the Revolution we enjoy, is exceedingly great.

We are ready to form too low an estimate of privileges, which we have always possessed, and to overlook blessings, of which we never knew how miserable a thing it is to be deprived. Ask the sick; they can tell the advantages of health. Ask the blind; they can tell what *a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun*. Ask the slave who is chained to the oar; he can tell the sweetness of liberty, and the bitterness of bondage. But how unreasonable, how foolish, is it to undervalue enjoyments, because we never mourned for their loss? One deserves to lose what, while possessed, one has not the wisdom and gratitude to esteem. To purchase a sense of the value of one's privileges, by experience of their loss, is to purchase at a very expensive rate. The man who buys knowledge at this rate, shall acquire it, indeed, but be miserable.

Suppose yourselves, for a moment, in the situation of your forefathers, before the Revolution: Your property exposed to the rapacious hands of every villain, who might be in favour at court; your persons not safe in your habitations; distressed in proportion to
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your innocence ; yea, for *Christ's* sake, killed all the day long ; and accounted as sheep for the slaughter *. How would you exult, in the prospect of possessing those blessings which we at present enjoy ! What lively gratitude would rise in your hearts to God, for so great a deliverance as that which he granted us in the Revolution !

The reasons of your joy are not diminished, because you exist in a happier age, than that in which your forefathers lived. The benefit of the Revolution is yours, as much as it was theirs. You enjoy the sweets of liberty, without having tasted of *the wormwood and the gall*. In consequence of that glorious event, you need not fear, lest avarice, stretching out the hand of uncontrouled power, should rob you of your property ; or cruel jealousy should deprive you of life. You can call what you possess your own. Your lives are dependent upon the will of none, but the Sovereign of the universe ; your property is secure from every power, but that of providence. The sword of persecution, which had frequently, in former times, been wielded, has, since the Revolution, lain in its sheath ; and conversion is left to be produced, by the more rational method of argument and persuasion.

* Rom. viii. 36.

suasion. Instead of being forced to conform
 to a wretched religion, deformed with super-
 stition, nonsense and idolatry, you are per-
 mitted to profess that pure and true religion,
 which the Son of God came into the world
 to promulgate, which his apostles taught, and
 his genuine followers in all ages will embrace.
 Accustomed to seek pardon and acceptance,
 through the obedience and death of Christ,
 you are strangers to the absurd method of
 obtaining it, by imaginary human merit, and
 cruel mortifications of the body. Acknow-
 ledging no head of the church but the glori-
 ous Son of God in human nature, the foun-
 tain of all grace, and the Lord of universal
 nature, you are permitted, with impunity, to
 reject a pretended visible head at Rome, who
 hath no blessings to bestow upon the church,
 and no power to protect her; and who is as
 different from Peter, whose successor he af-
 firms himself to be, as the want of faith and
 holiness, and ministerial labours can make
 him. Taught to worship one God, Father,
 Son, and Holy Ghost, through one Mediator,
 Jesus Christ, you are at liberty to refuse to
 adore angels, and saints departed; and to dis-
 dain to ask the assistance of their prayers,
 conscious that your great Intercessor has more
 love, and more care, and more wisdom than
 they

they all, and is able to do you more effectual good.

Can the Revolution be a blessing too old for gratitude, too antiquated for joy, since the deliverance obtained by it, is so great; and the advantages which we, as well as our ancestors, derive from it, are of such inestimable value? Let it not, then, be our reproach, when heaven has been so kind, that we return not to give God thanks. Let the abundance of our joy express the warmth of our gratitude, to him *who remembered us in our low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever* *.

Secondly, Our unworthiness of the blessings which, in consequence of the Revolution, we possess, ought to increase our gratitude, and heighten our joy.

When we look around us, and consider the situation of most of the other nations of the world, we must be insensible, and stupid indeed, if emotions of gratitude rise not in our hearts. The cloud, which presents to us a side so luminous and full of comfort, is to them dark and dismal. Liberty, a word familiar to our ears, is to them strange, and unknown. While, with us, the laws bear rule, they are dependent upon the caprice of men,

* Psal. cxxxvi. 23.

men, who act as if they supposed themselves born to be tyrants, and their subjects born to be slaves. Religion, a name still dearer than liberty, we have opportunity to know, as revealed from heaven, and freedom to profess and practise; while they, unacquainted with the truth, are subject to the domination of the Papal power, or deluded with the imposture of Mahomet, or living under the darkness of Heathenism.

Such is the melancholy state of the greater part of the world. Should we not drop a tear over the miseries of so many of our brethren, whose present life liberty does not cheer and enliven, and whose future prospects true religion does not illuminate; while we take up the harp of David, and, rejoicing in our own superior privileges, sing, *The Lord hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgements, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord**.

Why hath the Lord distinguished us, by such superior privileges? What are we, more than other nations; or what have we done, to deserve this peculiar kindness? We are not of nobler origin; for, has not God *made of one blood all nations of men, who dwell on the face of the earth*†?—We cannot claim any superiority of goodness. Our fathers were involved,

* Psalm cxlvii. 20.

† Acts xvii. 26.

volved, with the rest of the Christian world, in darkness and superstition; yea, after God graciously delivered them from these miseries, *their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant* *. If they rebelled against him, have we acted a worthier part? Have we not outdone them in wickedness? Do we not *revolt more and more*? — We cannot plead suitable gratitude, or singular purity of manners; for we have shamefully forgotten the kindness of the Lord, and strangely perverted our ways. Had the Lord *dealt with us after our sins, or rewarded us according to our iniquities* †, we should not have been assembled in this place, to day, in order to raise our united voices in songs of praise to an almighty Deliverer.

Why, then, has the Lord been so kind? We must seek the reason of his kindness in his sovereign good pleasure. And what return should we make him? Ought we not to *glorify him for his mercy* ‡? Ought we not to rejoice before him, saying, *Thou hast turned for us our mourning into dancing: thou hast put off our sackcloth, and girded us with gladness: To the end that our glory may sing praise unto thee, and not be silent: O Lord our God, we will give thanks unto thee for ever* §?

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* Psalm lxxviii. 37.
§ Psalm xxx. 11, 12.

† Psalm ciii. 10.

‡ Rom. xv. 9.

I shall conclude, by reminding you of some important particulars, suggested by the subject which has been under consideration.

1. Let us lament that the glory of the Revolution is, in some respects, obscured.

Our civil liberties, indeed, have suffered no violation. Feelingly alive to every injury which affects our temporal happiness, we have watched over them with care, and asserted them with zeal. But, amidst our solicitude to preserve them, have we not often deviated into the wildest licentiousness, and prostituted the sacred name of freedom, by employing it as a plea for lawless restraint? Has not our excellent constitution been often shaken, by the violence of party zeal; and oftener despised, amidst the murmurings of a peevish and discontented spirit? Our greatest privileges have become, through the wickedness of men, the sources of our corruption; and the streams which should convey to us health and blessedness, have often been poisoned by malice, and poured forth disorder and misery. Because we esteem it our right to inspect the political conduct of our governors, and, without hesitation, to approve or to blame, we have claimed it as our privilege to *revile the gods, and curse the ruler of the people*†; and, criticising

† Exod. xxii. 28.

criticizing with invidious malice, or uncandid severity, not only on their public administration, but on their personal characters; *we cast firebrands, arrows, and death, and say, Am I not in sport* †? Has not the liberty of the press, in like manner been abused, for the most infamous and detestable of purposes? Has not that, for which our fathers contended, as essential to freedom, and as necessary for the advancement of science and the increase of religious knowledge, degenerated into liberty to disseminate the most pernicious errors, and to spread infection among the morals of the people; in so great a degree, that good men begin to hesitate, whether it ought to be esteemed as a blessing, or abhorred as a curse?

When we turn our eyes, however, towards the other great blessing which we enjoy, religious liberty, the glory of the Revolution is still more obscured. In our zeal for our civil immunities, we have been very criminally inattentive to this more valuable possession. Part of it we have suffered to be forcibly taken from us; and much of what remains, to be miserably abused. Liberty, which is deemed an invaluable privilege, when it respects the concerns of this world, has been pronounced, when it respects the concerns of the other, a right

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which

† Prov. xxvi. 18, 19.

which the vulgar are not intitled to claim, and which it is dangerous for them to enjoy. Their souls they must intrust to the care of one whom they love not, and in whom they cannot confide; because their superior, who, perhaps, interests not himself in their spiritual edification, has been pleased thus to appoint. What is deservedly detested as an intolerable yoke in civil government, is by the most zealous advocates of liberty warmly contended for in religion, and strenuously supported; and, by a strange inconsistency, men, who affect to be champions for the rights of human nature, exert themselves, with equal industry, to subject us to slavery in the church, and to maintain our freedom in the state. Ecclesiastical patrons, a motley race, whose office, unknown in the scriptures, sprung up in the darkness of the middle age, which, it might have been expected, the morning light of the Reformation should have made to wither, and which ought, before now, to have been thrown out of the church, as a noxious weed, continue to exercise a tyrannical power in the church, and alienate the affections of the people from the established church, and often from religion itself. *The priests bear rule by their means*; and, though many still generously disdain such un-sanctified restraints, yet now multitudes, reconciled

conciled to the domination of these tyrannical lords, shamefully love to have it so *.

The consequences of this oppression are not more obvious, than melancholy. Men have been introduced into the church alike destitute of divine knowledge, and of sanctified zeal; whose ecclesiastical characters bear a striking resemblance to those mentioned by the prophet, *They are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber: Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter †.* The people under their care have been driven from the church; or have lost almost every thing of religion, but the name. *Many pastors have destroyed God's vineyard, they have trodden his pasture under foot; they have made his pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. They have made it desolate, and, being desolate, it mourneth unto him ‡.* Besides, a revolution has gradually been introduced, in consequence of this, into the church, from her ancient and scriptural principles, to principles, opposite to her Confession, and ruinous to the souls of her members. Reason, from the servant, has become the supplanter of faith; and of course, doctrines

* Jer. v. 31.

† Isa. lvi. 10, 11.

‡ Jer. xii. 10, 11.

trines esteemed sacred in better times, are either, with dextrous hypocrisy, kept out of view, or, with open effrontery, contradicted, and blasphemed. And thus, in a church where, once, nothing was to be heard but the sweet sound of the gospel of peace, many strange and jarring voices are now heard preaching another gospel.

Is there not reason, from this view of matters, to lament our fading glory? But, while we mourn over the desolations of Zion, let us not justify ourselves. Some have doubtless been more active than others, in working her desolation; but let no man, nor any party of men, pretend to acquit themselves. Religion hath surely been wounded in the house of her most zealous friends. We may all join in the penitential confession of Isaiah, and say, *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we do all fade as the leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that hath stirred up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us; and hast consumed us because of our iniquities**.

2. Let us ever remember, that the blessings which we now enjoy shall not always be continued with us.

Instability is the characteristic of all human things.

* Isa. lxiv. 6, 7.

things. Greatness and power have not, in any former instance, preserved kingdoms or empires, from experiencing the weakness and inactivity of age; and even those governments which have seemed to bid fairest for perpetuity, have been torn in pieces by intestine feuds, or overturned by external force, and, like others, have suffered a disgraceful fall. Where are now the mighty empire of Assyria, and the mightier empire of Rome? They are only to be found in the page of history. What security, then, have we, that our civil constitution shall last for ever? The wisest politician, and most watchful patriot, cannot guard it against the latent workings of corruption. An unexpected and mournful change may take place; and our nation again feel the iron rod of tyranny.

Are our religious privileges more secure? If we should enquire after the seven churches of Asia, once so celebrated, we shall observe desolation on every side; and, instead of the light of the glorious gospel, nothing but the darkness of Mahometan delusion. The Protestant church of France was once famous, in all the countries of the Reformation, for orthodoxy of doctrine, and excellence of discipline; but it is now no more. What was their case formerly, may be our case soon. They
abused

abused their privileges, departed from the ancient purity of doctrine, relaxed their discipline, and corrupted their ways; and God departed from them. We have followed them too closely in the path to ruin; and have we not reason to apprehend, that the God whom we have offended, may be provoked to deprive us of what we have so grossly abused. Let us not think that we are such favourites of heaven, as that he will not avenge our sin. *My spirit shall not always strive with man* *, was the divine denunciation some thousand years since; and, is it not now his prerogative, as well as formerly, to *turn rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground: A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein* †? Should we not, this day, then, *serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling* ‡? Should not fervent and humble prayer be mingled with the joys of this festive season, to him who hath been kind so long, and yet *waiteth that he may be gracious*? Should we not cry, with the ancient church, *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth, very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people* §?

3. Let

* Gen. vi. 3 † Psal. cvii. 33, 34. ‡ Psal. iii. 11. § Isa. lxiv. 8, 9.

3. Let us confide in that providence which hath hitherto been so kind.

Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help *. Able ministers may lose their skill; and zealous patriots may betray. Foreign allies may prove a broken reed; and troops, formerly brave, may turn back in the day of battle. Let us lift our eyes to the Governor among the nations, *who is wise in heart and mighty in strength* †; who can defend, with his almighty arm, our civil and sacred rights, from the secret designs of domestic enemies, and the open attacks of foreign foes. He never disappointed the expectations of them that trust in him. The experience of his former kindness authorizes this confidence in him. We trust not in a God whose goodness we do not know, and whose power we have not seen. In past times, he hath often appeared great in performing for us seasonable deliverances; and have we not reason to believe that, since *his hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor his ear become heavy, that it cannot hear* ‡, he will preserve our nation in danger, deliver his church out of the hands of the oppressor, and restore beauty and glory to his ordinances?

Lastly, Let us improve the advantages which we, at present, enjoy.

These

* Psal. cxlvi. 3

† Job. ix. 4.

‡ Isa. lix. 1.

These were given us, that they might be improved. Improvement is what he expects; what duty, and gratitude, and every worthy principle demand; and what, if we make not, our conduct must be inexcusable, and our account dreadful. Let us then live as it becometh a people so highly favoured. Since God has been peculiarly kind, let us serve him more zealously, and glorify him more abundantly, than others. Let us *walk while we have the light, lest darkness come upon us* †. Let us *remember whence we are fallen, and repent, and do the first works, lest the Lord come to us quickly, and remove the candlestick out of its place* ‡. If we have never yet in truth believed that gospel, which he graciously continues among us, let us now believe it, as the kind message of life and salvation. The faith of the gospel will put us in possession of a nobler salvation, than that which we have been, this day, contemplating; and give us reason for singing, in a more elevated strain, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.*

† John xii. 35. ‡ Rev. ii. 5.

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